



**The Catholic Foundation
of Central Florida**
Inspire Giving. Fund God's Work.

History of The Catholic Foundation of Central Florida

Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk,
Seminole, Sumter & Volusia Counties

HISTORY OF THE CFOCF

In 2005 the Diocese of Orlando began the steps which would formally establish an independent, community foundation responsible for raising, managing and distributing philanthropic funds to provide long-term, sustainable support for the parishes, schools, agencies and life-changing ministries across the nine-county Diocese.

The Catholic Foundation of Central Florida was established as a direct outgrowth of the First General Synod of the Diocese, *“Starting Afresh From Christ.”* The Synod, an 18-month collaborative envisioning process, brought together 1,000 men and women to serve on various planning commissions and seek to discern God’s will for the Church in Central Florida.

Their collective efforts resulted in a shared vision that has guided our community of faith through the years. The Foundation has played an active role in advancing this shared vision as together we have strived to:

- **Grow** in our personal, living relationship with Christ, and commit to growing our parishes, schools and life-changing ministries;
- **Lead** the Church in Central Florida to a new experience of holiness and abundant life in Christ; and
- **Share** God’s love for all people, giving of our time, talent and treasure in a spirit of love for the Lord.

The Foundation is incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, fully endorsed by the Diocese and its Bishop, Most Reverend John Noonan. This legal structure, established in 2007, ensures that all gifts will be used for their intended purposes and provides a level of efficiency, accountability and transparency that earns the respect and confidence of donors and establishes The Foundation as a national model for Catholic philanthropy and stewardship.

At the time of its inception, The Foundation represented a new paradigm for funding diocesan-wide initiatives that would strengthen our people and parishes and help secure the financial resources needed to achieve the vision of being *“Alive in Christ!”*

The Foundation’s efforts resulted in a sound and sustainable financial platform, reflecting our Catholic faith and virtues, and enabling the Diocese to implement the recommendations of the Synod commissions and successfully pursue its most pressing priorities as the 21st century unfolds. These included:

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- Expanding the presence and impact of our Catholic schools across the region;
- Strengthening our outreach ministries to the poor and marginalized through Catholic Charities of Central Florida;
- Starting new parishes and missions and increasing our support for existing parishes;
- Addressing the issue of priestly vocations and increasing the number of viable candidates for the priesthood; and
- Assisting the faithful to grow in intimacy and communion with Jesus Christ through a vision of lifelong Catholic education and faith formation.

These and other pastoral initiatives comprised an ambitious agenda for the next decade and it was determined would require funding in the range of \$350 million or more. The Diocese developed a blended growth plan that would include a creative mix of funding strategies to support these initiatives. These strategies included both a tax-exempt/ taxable bond financing plan along with the *Alive in Christ* multiple-year and diocesan-wide capital campaign.

The Foundation was responsible for securing private support as part of the growth plan — including overseeing and implementing the diocesan-wide campaign — at a level unprecedented in the history of the Diocese. All stewardship and development functions within the Diocese would fall under the purview of The Foundation, and it would manage diocesan and parish endowments to leverage investment opportunities and maximize performance. The active phase of the campaign launched in 2009 and continued through 2015. There were continuation efforts and redemption which extended until the campaign was formally and holistically closed out in 2018. A total of \$114 million was collected and provided new parishes, renovations for parishes and schools and the initial funds for endowments supporting social outreach through Catholic Charities, school tuition, and clergy and lay leader formation.

These activities would chart a new course for the Church in Central Florida and potentially benefit every area of our spiritual life together. The Foundation followed its mission to encourage selfless stewardship among individuals, families and organizations; safeguard and promote accountability of the gifts entrusted to its care; and engage donors to support the spiritual, educational and social needs of our faith community.

The Catholic Foundation of Central Florida bylaws stipulate that the corporation have five Members and between 15 and 40 Directors. The members include the Bishop, Vicar General and Chancellor of the Diocese and the Chair and Treasurer of the corporation.

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The Directors would include clergy and lay members from within the geographic boundaries of the Diocese. Mr. William Orosz, parishioner from Annunciation Catholic Church in Altamonte Springs, served as The Foundation's first Chairman of the Board. In the first couple of years, The Foundation recruited the Founding Directors which included Joseph Sciortino, David Powers, Pat Rainey, Steve Zepf and Jim Croson. Additionally, the first Spiritual Director to serve The Foundation was Father (now Bishop) Stephen D. Parkes.

The persistence and commitment of the pioneering Directors served The Foundation as "spiritual entrepreneurs," with a heart for the Lord and a mind for business. Their time of service built on the momentum generated by the Synod and helped shape the work and witness of the Church in Central Florida.

The Founding Directors made a substantial contribution of time, talent and resources. Each provided seed money to help fund the establishment of The Foundation in support of the diocesan-wide capital campaign. Ultimately, the willingness of these Directors to serve and give transcended time and money — with The Foundation's success measured more so by humility and love of Christ and the difference The Foundation makes in our Central Florida Church and in the lives of others.

Our initial team members came from what was the Diocesan Development Office which would close as The Foundation assumed the Diocese's annual appeal and the *Alive in Christ* campaign. The Diocese of Orlando pays an annual service fee for The Foundation to manage Our Catholic Appeal where collections have grown from \$11,000,000 to over \$16,000,000. Planned giving was another one of The Foundation's initial programs supported by an annual service fee paid by the Diocese. Our team provided donor services and educational information about estate planning through the *Alive in Christ* campaign with a total of over \$28,100,000 planned gifts made during the campaign, with more than \$8,200,000 currently active or pending.

In 2012 The Foundation launched a new offertory enhancement initiative (OEI). This program was supported by an annual service fee from the Diocese, provided to parishes at no cost and focused on stewardship and engaging lay witness speakers to inspire giving through returning our gifts to God. Since inception the OEI program has increased offertory in parishes throughout the Diocese by almost \$8.5 million.

In 2013 The Catholic Foundation began providing individual parish and school campaigns. The revenue for these came from service fees paid by the parish or school. St. John the Evangelist in Viera was our first parish campaign. With the pastor we launched *God's Heart, Our Dream*

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campaign which was successful and resulted in a groundbreaking in 2016 and church dedication in 2018.

Additionally, in 2013 The Foundation Board of Directors defined a terms structure for existing board members which would allow the organization to focus on recruiting new board members while board member term expirations staggered over a three-year period.

The Foundation Board of Directors also contracted with The Concord Advisory Group in 2013. Investments grew at The Foundation and in 2015, The Foundation became a qualified investor with access to additional market managers and funds. To meet the needs of the diocesan entities, The Foundation introduced the second investment portfolio option, a short-term reserve fund. In late 2016 a third investment portfolio option was introduced which provided longer-term investment allocations for non-endowed funds. At this time investment fees were rationalized for competitiveness and to provide meaningful value through our Catholic compliant funds and investor services.

At its 10-year anniversary in 2017, The Foundation updated its logo, tagline and mission statement with a modern look and message that projects its professionalism and stewardship excellence. To reflect its partnership with the Diocese of Orlando, the Foundation and Diocesan logo designs both use blue and gold colors, the Cross and Eucharist. The Foundation's updated mission statement read: "The Catholic Foundation of Central Florida inspires giving to fund God's work for the Diocese of Orlando." The new tagline: "Inspire Giving. Fund God's Work."

In 2018 The Foundation leadership team turned over and the Board of Directors conducted a recruitment process. After bringing on a new President & CEO the Board of Directors began a collaborative strategic planning process soliciting lay and clergy constituent feedback and engaging the full board, team and partners. A three-year Strategic Plan was launched in 2019 with a 10-year vision capturing the timeless principles originally envisioned, enhancing our mission, adding a vision and values and defining the hybrid model of The Foundation with core services in investment management, donor experiences and community leadership. Some of the strategic plan initiatives launched in 2019 included the option for Donor Advised Funds and the establishment of a diocesan-wide Planned Giving Advisory Council. Planned gifts outside of the Alive in Christ campaign total more than \$75,775,000 with over \$33,850,000 active and pending.

In 2020 The Foundation team continued amid the global pandemic to serve the increasing and changing needs of our Catholic Church and community in Central Florida. Programs and initiatives were reimaged and revised to accommodate the new normal while continuing to inspire giving. The future health and vitality of the Diocese — and the people we serve — will

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depend on our successful implementation of the vision God has revealed to us. We have abundant gifts, talents and resources that we must harness and share in new ways to make our vision a reality. This will be the task of The Foundation Board of Directors. Their leadership and guidance will further stewardship at all levels of parish and diocesan life and their personal commitments will set the standard for generosity among parishioners across the Diocese.